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Government



Flag of Eritrea

General

Eritrea, located in the NE part of Africa, is bounded on the NE by the Red Sea, on the SE by Djibouti, and on the NW by Sudan. The Dahlak Archipelago, consisting of about 300 small and mostly uninhabited islands, lies close off the coast.

Highlands in the W part of the country descend to a desert strip along the coast.

The climate is hot and dry along the desert strip while the highlands are cooler and wetter. The rain is heaviest between June and September except on the coastal desert. Frequent droughts occur.

Buoyage System

The IALA Buoyage System (Region A) is in effect. See Chart No. 1 for further IALA Buoyage System information.

Currency

The official unit of currency is the Ethiopian birr, consisting of 100 cents.

Eritrea, formerly ruled by Italy, was set up as a British protectorate in 1941. In 1952, the United Nations sanctioned the federation of Eritrea with Ethiopia and it was incorporated as a province in 1962. An armed struggle for independence lasted from 1972 until 1991 when an administration, recognized by Ethiopia, was set up. Independent sovereignty was proclaimed by Eritrea in 1993. The country is now a one-party republic.

The President appoints ministers to the State Council. The legislature consists of a unicameral 150-member National Assembly.

The legal system is based on a decree of May, 1993.

The capital of Eritrea is Asmara (formerly Asmera).

An agreement of July, 1993 gives Ethiopia the right to use the ports of Assab and Massawa.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed:

New Year's Day	January 1
International Women's Day	March 8
May Day	May 1
National Liberation Day	May 24
Martyr Day	June 20
Launching of Armed Struggle Day	September 1
Christmas Day	December 25

Islamic holidays, which are subject to the appearance of the moon, include Eid Al-Fitter (End of Ramadan), Eid Al-Adha (End of Pilgrimage), Hijrah (Islamic New Year), Ashoora, and the Prophet's Birthday.

Coptic Christian holidays, which are subject to the appearance of the moon, include Coptic Christmas, Epiphany, Good Friday, Coptic Easter, Coptic New Year, and Meskal (Finding of the True Cross).

Industries

The country is basically an agricultural economy, with 80 per cent of the population living in rural areas. Industries in-

clude mining, textiles, oil products, leather and hide products, and food processing. Production has been heavily damaged by 30 years of war and reoccurring droughts.

Languages

The official languages are Arabic and Tigrinya. There are eight other indigenous languages. English is used in secondary education.

Time Zone

The Time Zone description is CHARLIE (-3). Daylight Savings Time is not observed.

World Time Zone Chart
<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ref/pdf/802801.pdf>

U.S. Embassy

The U.S. Embassy is situated at Franklin D. Roosevelt Street, Asmara.

The mailing address is P.O. Box 211, Asmara.